



# rivers&trails

National  
Park  
Service



*rivers, trails, and conservation assistance program*

## **RIO GRANDE WILD & SCENIC RIVER (TX) MANAGEMENT PLAN**

### **Project Goal**

Achieve consensus on management strategies for protecting the outstandingly remarkable values on the Rio Grande Wild & Scenic River.

### **Background**

The Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River provides protection of the pristine character of the Rio Grande for 196 miles along the river's course. Approximately 69 miles of the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River designation lies within Big Bend National Park, and an additional 118 miles is downstream of the Park, all of which is considered private property. Big Bend National Park has administrative responsibilities for managing the Wild and Scenic River.

In May 2000, Big Bend National Park initiated a planning effort for the Rio Grande Wild & Scenic River to address unresolved issues from a 1981 General Management Plan effort. A final river boundary was never approved because a "gradient boundary" alternative was deemed to be legally insufficient and the National Park Service was instructed not to implement the plan. A wild and scenic river must have established boundaries that protect the outstandingly remarkable values. Justifiably, landowners along the river corridor are concerned about the consequences of federal boundaries being established on their property.

To address planning and management issues on the river, a Rio Grande Partnership Team has been formed. A partnership approach to

river management implies that success is everyone's ability to assume some responsibility for implementation of management actions. The National Park Service has brought together the key people who know the resources, the issues, and can think about the future of the Rio Grande corridor. The team will provide recommendations to the National Park Service.

### **National Park Service Role**

The Rivers & Trails Program was requested to provide support wild and scenic river planning because of program staff experience in private-lands river issues. Program staff are primarily responsible for developing a public involvement and outreach program for the project. Specific roles include:

- Facilitation of Rio Grande Partnership Team meetings and public workshops.
- Explore cooperative management strategies and inform landowners of opportunities.



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- Guide Rio Grande Partnership Team through community-based planning process.
- Maintain communication among Partnership Team members and NPS.

### Project Results to Date

- Rio Grande Partnership Team established with 11 people representing key stakeholders. The Team has held three day-long meetings to establish a workplan, discuss river issues and develop standards and criteria for resources assessment.
- Completion of Landowners Workshop which clarified NPS authorities within a wild and scenic river boundary on private land.
- Mutual "Boundary Starting Point Agreement" reached among Partnership Team members.

### Outstanding Boating Opportunities



### Project Partners

- Big Bend National Park
- Brewster County
- Commercial Outfitters
- NPS Denver Service Center
- Rio Grande Landowners Association
- Terrell County
- Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
- Texas Rivers Protection Association
- World Wildlife Fund

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